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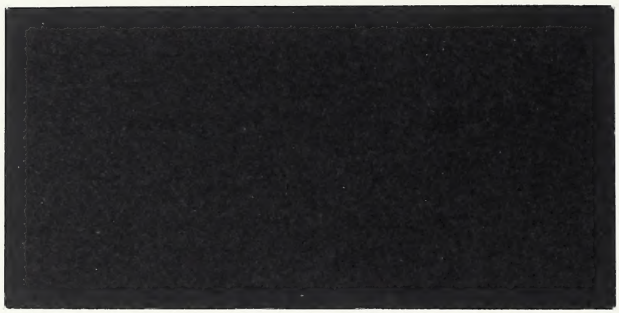
MODULE V WORKBOOK
SION - MAKING AND ACTION-PLAN



Alberta

PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

CANADIANA

MAY 28 1991

MODULE V WORKBOOK
DECISION - MAKING AND ACTION-PLANNING

In this module you will develop skills in using one method of evaluating and deciding about occupational alternatives. You will start by reviewing and identifying your own Career Blocks and looking at ways of dealing with them.

You will then learn the principles of action planning and develop skills to start your own. You will also look at forces within yourself, in your relationships and in your environment that may hinder or help you in reaching your goals.

Turn on the tape when you are ready.

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CAREER BLOCKS

Indicate which of these things may hinder your taking action towards achieving your career goals.

_____ Fear of failure

_____ Fear of success

_____ Fear of disapproval

_____ Fear of choosing the wrong occupation

_____ Fear of going back to school

_____ Fear of applying on other jobs

_____ Lack of support or understanding from others

_____ Family responsibilities (lack of time, energy)

_____ Lack of confidence

_____ Lack of finances

_____ Guilt

_____ Feeling overwhelmed

_____ Laziness or inertia

_____ Unable to decide what I really want to do

_____ Lack of long-range goals

_____ Goal seems unattainable

_____ Insufficient education

_____ Poor health

_____ Other _____

_____ Other _____

Fear of Failure

Fear of failure is related to fear of taking risks. One way of dealing with it is to make a decision that allows you to "get your feet wet" before plunging in; for example, taking a night class first before committing yourself to a whole program of study.

A good support network can also help you deal with your fears. Discuss your plans with people who will give you the positive support and encouragement you need and avoid discussing your plans with people who are negative!

You may also need to do some work to build your own self-esteem. The Career Development Resource Centre offers some helpful audio-cassette programs, available by calling 422-4282:

- The Psychology of Achievement
- Power Under Pressure

Fear of Success

Some people tend to associate negative personal consequences with success. In the case of women, they are more likely to enter traditional female occupations, and may also be hesitant to advance their careers within their chosen occupation. The negative consequences that are feared are loss of social affiliation and a feeling of loss of femininity.

Fear of success can be difficult to deal with because it is something we learn in childhood. One way to approach it is by choosing some role models--people who you admire who have achieved success. If possible, talk to these people--ask them how they managed and discuss your fears with them frankly.

The Career Development Resource Centre (422-4282) offers some audio-cassette programs that may be helpful to you:

- The Making of the Achiever
- The Psychology of Achievement

Fear of Disapproval

Fear of disapproval can be a real impediment to career decision-making. Others may disapprove of your career choice for any number of reasons, some legitimate and some not. They may be more concerned about their own needs then they are about yours, or they too may be plagued by some of the fears listed.

A good way to deal with the potential disapproval of others is to involve them in the decision-making process: discussing your needs and desires with them, getting their assistance when you are exploring options and involving them in making the actual decision. Doing this is particularly important when other people, such as family members, will be affected by your decisions.

"Changing Course Midstream" and "The Adult Back-to-School Book" both have sections on gaining support for your decisions.

Fear of Choosing the Wrong Occupation

Avoiding taking a risk has its roots in the fear that the option chosen may not turn out well. It is the uncertainty involved in making any change. But change is a part of life and there is some risk involved in every decision--even not deciding is risky.

The element of chance can never be eliminated, but the risks can be substantially reduced by thorough research prior to making a decision and by building as much flexibility as possible into your career plans after a decision has been made. Remember, any decision can be re-assessed and changed as time and circumstances warrant.

Fear of Going Back to School

For many people, choosing a different occupation may require going back to school to upgrade their qualifications. This can be scary, especially if you have been out of school for some time.

One way to deal with your fear is to start by taking one course. This can help you get back into the routine of studying. The "Adult Back-to School Book" can help you deal with some of the concerns you may have.

Most of the larger institutions have guidance counsellors to assist in program selection and provide a general orientation to school life. They can also provide information on financial assistance that may be available to you.

Fear of Applying on Other Jobs

Although both men and women may have this fear, it probably is more frequently a problem for women than for men.

Government of Alberta statistics show that women are just as successful on job competitions as men. But, they don't apply as frequently as their male counterparts. This is often tied in with fear of failure.

Good planning and preparation can help reduce this fear. "The Job Seekers Handbook" provides excellent advice on resume and interview preparation. In addition, the Career Development Resource Centre offers helpful audio-cassette programs, available by calling 422-4282:

- Self-Presentation for the Professional Women
- The Complete Speaker
- Get That Job

Lack of Support or Understanding From Others

(See also Fear of Disapproval). Any change we make in our lives is traumatic. Support and encouragement from others can mean the difference between moving towards our goals or taking no action at all.

The Support-Network Review will help you assess your support network and identify where you need to build on it. "Changing Course Midstream" and "The Adult Back-to-School Book" each have sections dealing with the support you need.

Family Responsibilities

Family responsibilities can place a drain on both your time and your physical energy. They certainly need to be a part of any career-decisions but they need not necessarily stop you from taking some action. Developing career goals can give you a sense of direction. Your action plan can then include a long-term goal along with some small steps that may be manageable in the short-term.

The Career Development Resource Centre offers some helpful audio cassettes, available by calling 422-4282:

- Getting Things Done: Strategies You Can Use Immediately to Save Time and Achieve More Every Day
- How to Relieve Your Stress
- Stress Management for the Professional: How to Feel Better and Perform Better on the Job
- Survival Skills: A Stress Reduction Program for Type A's
- The Superwoman Syndrome
- Insight System for Planning Your Time and Your Life

Lack of Confidence

(See also Fear of Failure). Lack of confidence can stop us from doing the things we really want to do in this life. It is often related to the messages we learned in childhood about ourselves and our abilities. Small successes can help build confidence--you may need to develop an action plan that moves you toward your goal in small steps.

A support network is also important to provide you with people who will remind you of all your abilities and past successes.

The Career Development Resource Centre provides audio-cassettes aimed at increasing your assertiveness and self-esteem (available by calling 422-4282):

- Assert Yourself and Get the Results You Want
- Go For It! How to Win at Love, Work and Play
- The Psychology of Achievement

Lack of Finances

If pursuing your occupational choice means taking some courses to upgrade your qualifications or moving into a lower paying job, finances can be a real concern. But this should not stop you from thoroughly researching your career options to gather all the facts.

Evening or correspondence courses may start you in the direction of upgrading and still be financially manageable. For some, job sharing may be a feasible alternative. "Taking Charge of Your Money" can help you to plan and budget and "Financial Assistance for Alberta Students" outlines the assistance available to you, should you decide to go back to school.

Guilt

Many people have been raised to believe that the needs of others come before their own. Thus, when they start to do some career planning, the very process of looking at their own needs and desires creates feelings of guilt.

The only way to deal with this is by recognizing the cause of your guiltfeelings and granting yourself the right to take care of your own needs. If your guilt is tied in with your family responsibilities, refer to that section as well.

Feeling Overwhelmed

Career planning requires a good deal of time and effort. At any stage in the process you may begin to feel overwhelmed by the task. If this happens it would be best to develop an action plan for completing the process. By breaking it down into smaller steps and assigning reasonable time frames you can make the process less threatening and more exciting. After all, planning your career should be an enjoyable activity!

Laziness or Inertia

You may feel that attaining your career goals will take more time and effort than you are willing to give. If this is the case, try to picture yourself in 5 to 10 years time. How will you feel if you are still in the same job or occupation? If you're not likely to feel good about it, make yourself an action plan. Make sure it contains steps that are small enough to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Set target dates and build in rewards for yourself when you meet these. They need only be small rewards but they are important to keep you motivated.

Share your goal with a person who will not only give you encouragement but who will also give you a nudge if you need it. Try to find someone who is also working toward a career goal. That way, you can be an ongoing support to each other. Watching someone else "in motion" can be a strong tool in keeping yourself on track.

Unable to Decide What I Really Want to Do

If this is a problem for you, you may need to do some more self assessment to clarify your needs, wants and interests. On the other hand you may need to do more research into occupations to discover all the options available.

Often, people who are unable to make a decision are actually being "blocked" by other fears or concerns. Go over the "Career Blocks" list again to see if any of these are the real problem.

Going through the decision-making process will often bring your "real" concerns to the surface. If you have some options you are considering, why not evaluate them using a decision-making process? It may help you clarify areas where information you need to make a final decision is lacking, or where those other fears are causing a block.

Lack of Long-Range Goals

This is very similar to being unable to decide what you really want to do. In the case of women, it also reflects that fact that "women seldom plan beyond until".

I'm going to school until ...
I'm going to work until ...
I'm going to stay home with my children until ...
I'm going back to work until ...

Unfortunately, in many cases "until" never comes. It is helpful to remember that goals are the guideposts that lead us to action, that they can be changed but that without them you are likely to do nothing. Help in setting long-range goals is provided on two audio-cassette programs available through the Career Development Resource Centre (422-4282):

- The Making of the Achiever
- The Psychology of Achievement

Goal Seems Unattainable

Long-range goals can seem so far away or so big that they appear to be unattainable. By breaking these down into smaller goals, with shorter time frames, you can increase your chances of success. This also allows you to re -assess your long-term goal at each stage and make any adjustments your current situation dictates.

Insufficient Education

There are many evening and correspondence courses available if your occupational choice requires upgrading. Financial assistance is also available. "The Adult Back-to-School Book" and "Financial Assistance for Alberta Students" provide useful information.

In the meantime, you may want to explore similar occupations at a more junior level to give you greater exposure to your area of interest.

Poor Health

Poor health can be a real career block. The best thing to do in this situation is to understand your limitations and determine during your occupational research whether they will make your goal unattainable. It will be important to have several career options. If your first choice is not realistic, move on to your second!

THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Step 1: Identify the decision to be made

Step 2: Gather information

Step 3: Identify or make alternatives

Step 4: Weigh evidence

Step 5: Choose among alternatives

Step 6: Take action

Step 7: Review decision and consequences

DECISION-MAKING WORKSHEET

State the decision you need to make. Be as specific as possible. _____

Use this chart to evaluate your options. List each option across the top of the page. For each one, list all the advantages relating to it. Use +, ++, or +++ to indicate how strong an advantage it is. Next list all the disadvantages for each option. Use -, --, or --- to indicate how strong a disadvantage it is. When you have completed the chart review the +'s and -'s for each option, weighing each carefully to make your decision.

	Option:	**Option:**	**Option:**
	_____	_____	_____
Advantages	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
Disadvantages	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____

State the decision you have made_____

ONE FINAL CHECK: Does the decision "feel" right? If not, review your chart - perhaps you missed noting some advantages and disadvantages.

GOAL SETTING

Successful goal setting and achievement is the result of planning, thinking and doing. It is not accidental. Rate your goal first against these questions.

1. **Is it achievable?** - do I have the potential to reach the goal. Am I positive about the goal?
2. **Is it realistic for me?** - given my lifestyle and roles as well as the area I live in. Do I have enough information to help me along?
3. **Is it specific?** - has a solid definition. Does it have a focus. Can I break it into workable steps?
4. **Do I <u>want</u> to do it?** - am I motivated to complete it. What strengths do I have to help me achieve it?
5. **Does it fit my personal values?** - I believe in it. Is it worthwhile to put energy into?
6. **Have I set a target date?** - can I see a time of completion?
7. **Can I get support from others?** - will I have help or barriers from others?

Success comes from planning. Although not all goals can be achieved, we learn from each effort/step we take.

NOTHING WORKS UNLESS WE DO.

Turn the tape back on when you are ready.

ACTION PLANNING/GOAL SETTING

Goal:

_____

_____

_____

Target Date:

_____

STEPS	TO DO'S	COMPLETION DATE	CHECK WHEN COMPLETE
1. _____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____

(add more if necessary)

TIPS FOR KEEPING YOURSELF MOTIVATED

- Build rewards into your action plan. They need only be small but they help celebrate your achievements.
- Share your plans with someone who will support you. Ask them to remind you if you start to lose motivation.
- Set a date on your calendar every 3 months to review your action plan, your progress to date and modify your plan if necessary. If possible, do this with one of your support people.
- Paste a picture on your mirror or fridge that will remind you of your goal.
- Send yourself a letter. (Refer to next exercise.)

SAMPLE OF A LETTER TO YOURSELF

(3 months down the road)

Dear Lisa:

Just a quick note to see how your plans are progressing. I know you worked hard to complete the "5" modules on Career Planning so don't let yourself slip up now. By now you have registered and started that evening course at N.A.I.T. How's it going? I hope well. Going back to school takes a lot of energy, planning and enthusiasm. Before you know it the semester will be over. Good luck with your final exam!

Just a reminder about your long term goals. It might be time to take them out and see what tasks you need to complete, this next week and month.

Keep up the good work and remember I'm routing for you.

Lisa

Now, seal your letter, address it to yourself and send it in another envelope, to your Career Planning Consultant. Remember to note the date you want it sent and we will mail it to you on that date.

REACHING MY GOAL

What will help? What will hinder?

1. What are the forces within me, in my relationships, or in any environment that may hinder me from reaching my goal?

   a. Hindering forces within myself (e.g., personal characteristics, values, or skills, disorganization, lack of confidence).

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   How can I work with or around these forces?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   b. Hindering forces in my relationships (e.g., family disapproval, lack of financial help, disapproval of friends).

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   How can I work with or around these forces?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   c. Hindering forces in my environment (e.g., job market).

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

How can I work with or around these forces?

2. What are the forces within me, in my relationships, or in my environment that may help me reach my alternative or goal?

   a. Helpful forces within myself (e.g., personal characteristics, values, or skills, patience perseverance, versatility, assertiveness).

   How can I use these forces?

   b. Helpful forces in my relationships (e.g., moral support from my family).

   c. Helpful forces in my environment (e.g., promotion opportunities, large department, supportive staff development courses).

How will I use these forces?

3. Are there other people I would like to help and support me in furthering my career goals?

In what ways do I think this person or people would be effective in helping me?

A WORD IN CLOSING

Congratulations! You have now completed the 5 module correspondence course on Career Planning. Please feel free to call your Consultant if you want to do any follow-up Career Planning or if you want to talk about your progress as you put your plans into action (or if you have any questions about this module).

Information packages on Resume Preparation, Creative Job Search and Preparing For The Job Interview are also available upon request, as well as another correspondence series on Improving Your Job Satisfaction.

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR CAREER PLANS!

PLEASE RETURN YOUR AUDIO-CASSETTE TAPE TO YOUR CAREER PLANNING CONSULTANT.

N.L.C. - B.N.C.
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